

STATE SENATOR . MICHAEL PRUSI . 38TH DISTRICT

Prusi Press Release

P. O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-7840 • Fax: 517-373-3932
E-mail: sennmprusi@senate.michigan.gov • www.senate.state.mi.us/dem/SD38



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Contact: Sen. Mike Prusi
Phone: 517/373-7840
Toll Free: 866/305-2038

SENATOR WORKS TO PREVENT FUTURE SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE CLOSURES

Prusi offers amendment to SOS office budget requiring 5% savings

LANSING – Continuing his fight to prevent future closings similar to the proposed plan for the Ishpeming Secretary of State office, State Senator Mike Prusi (D-Ishpeming) worked with his colleagues to include new language to the SOS's budget. The new language will require at least 60 days written notice be given to members of the House and Senate in districts that will be affected by the closure. The Secretary of State must also provide all analysis done regarding criteria for changes in the location of branch offices.

"I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to ensure that this budget bill passes," Senator Prusi said. "The lack of communication from Secretary Land was disappointing to many of us in the Legislature. The Secretary of State office is often the only contact Michigan residents have with state government; many of these closings will be a severe inconvenience."

Senator Prusi's fight began after Secretary Land failed to notify members of the legislature of her new branch consolidation plan. Under the new plan, the Ishpeming office will be consolidated with the Marquette office, forcing residents from several western U.P. communities to drive further for needed services. Under the proposal, the Secretary of State will continue to lease the Ishpeming office location for another 3.5 years at an expense of \$1,352 per month despite the closing of this location. This will result in approximately \$56,784 of unnecessary state spending. Twenty-one branch offices will be closed or consolidated throughout the state, several with similar lease agreements.

As a result of these findings, Senator Prusi offered an amendment requiring a 5% savings for future office closures or consolidations. Prusi's amendment was defeated during floor debate. For the past two years, the Secretary of State's budget has been one of only two state budgets to see an increase from general fund dollars.

(MORE)

“When we allocated additional dollars to the Secretary of State, we were expecting improved services for the residents of Michigan,” Senator Prusi said. “The closing of the Ishpeming office contradicts our intent. The U.P. will not benefit from the supposed customer improvements, including Saturday hours as proposed for some downstate offices.”

Marquette County is the largest land mass county in the state, accounting for more than 1,800 square miles and continues to see an increase in population. Under the plan released by Secretary Land, the Upper Peninsula will have only 15 offices serving over 16,400 square miles, or one branch for every 1,093 square miles. In contrast, Southeast Michigan will have one branch for every 46 square miles.

#

Mike Prusi serves as Democratic Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. He represents the 38th Senate District, which includes all Upper Peninsula counties west of Luce County.